

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Commodity Contracting Opportunities for Rural America Southeast Regional Small Business Conference

**Albany State University - Albany, Georgia
ACAD Auditorium
November 9, 2009**

Conference Agenda

PURPOSE: To facilitate rural economic growth and increase small business contracting opportunities for Rural America.

EXPECTED LONG-TERM OUTCOME: As part of the on-going process of this program, small farmer-owned cooperatives, small rural businesses, and producers will:

- Gain a working knowledge necessary for developing the capabilities and certifications to participate in Federal food commodity procurements;
- Learn about USDA technical assistance resources for business development;
- Establish relationships with key USDA personnel who are responsible for the development of procurement policy and standards; and
- Increase demand for their products and services within local food systems, USDA, and other Federal agencies.

8:00 – 9:00

Registration

9:00 – 9:30

Welcome and Introduction

- Albany State University ROTC – Presentation of the Colors
- Dr. Everette J. Freeman, President Albany State University
- Congressman Sanford Bishop
- Quinton Robinson, Director, USDA, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU)

9:30 – 9:45

Overview

Joe Ware, Deputy Director, USDA, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

9:45 – 11:00

Panel 1

Doing Business with USDA: Process and Requirements

Description: Products and services that USDA buys; procurement methods; business qualifications and certifications

Moderator:

Belinda Ward, Associate Director, OSDBU

Panelists:

- USDA-OSDBU – USDA Small Business Opportunities
Joe Ware, Deputy Director, USDA OSDBU
- Agricultural Marketing Service – Commodity Purchasing
Michelle Warren, Procurement Supervisor, Fruit and Vegetable Program
- Farm Service Agency – Commodity Operations
- ❖ Sandra Wood, Assistant Deputy, Office of the Deputy Administrator for Commodity Operations
- ❖ Patrick Dardis, Deputy Director, Kansas City Commodity Office

11:00 – 11:15

Break

11:15 – 12:15

Panel 2 (A & B)

**Small Business Capacity Building –
Rural Development and Farm Service Agencies**

Description: Business structure; management; finance; production; marketing

Moderator:

Barbara LaCour, Associate Director, OSDBU

Panel 2-A –

Panelists:

Rural Development Perspective and Technical Assistance

State Directors and Staff – Georgia, Florida, and Alabama

- Shirley Sherrod, GA State Director
- Beverly Helton, Acting AL State Director
- Joseph Mueller, Acting FL State Director

12:30 – 1:45

Lunch

Location - L. Orene Hall

Guest Speaker:

Georgia Agriculture Commissioner

Tommy Irvin

2:00 – 3:00

Panel 2-B – Small Business Capacity Building (cont.)

Panelists:

Farm Service Agency - Perspective and Technical Assistance

State Executive Directors and Staff – Georgia, Florida, and Alabama

- Hobby Stripling, GA State Executive Director
- Daniel Robinson, AL State Executive Director
- Debby Folsom, Acting FL State Executive Director

Farm Loan Program

Mark Falcone, Deputy Director, Loan Making Division

3:00 – 3:15

Panel 3

SCORE

Description: SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business" is a nonprofit association dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and the formation, growth and success of small business nationwide. SCORE is a resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Panelists:

Dick Godschaulk, SCORE Team Lead, Macon, GA

3:15 – 3:30

Break

3:30 – 4:30

Panel 4

Assessing and Creating Demand for Your Product or Service

Description: Customers – Federal – State – School Systems - Commercial; success stories – small farmer/processor, school systems

Moderator:

Michelle Warren, Procurement Supervisor, Fruit and Vegetable Program

Panelists:

- Lucas Knowles, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary, Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Program
- Lynn Rodgers, Branch Chief, Food and Nutrition Service
- Ben Burkett, Executive Director, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives
- Vonda Richardson, Florida A&M University

4:30 – 5:15

Panel 5

Working with the Small Business Community: Mentoring and Teaming

Description: Informal agreements; formal agreements; prime contracting and subcontracting; joint ventures; small farmer-owned cooperatives

Moderator:

Joe Ware, Deputy Director, OSDBU

Panelists:

Commercial Food Suppliers/Distributors

Jimmie Williams, McDonald's Corporation, Director, Federal Government Relations

5:15 – 5:30

USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach

Carmen Jones, Senior Advisor, Departmental Management

5:30

Next Steps

Joe Ware

Closing

Quinton Robinson